Africa RISING Ghana

Regional Research Team Meeting Report: Northern Region

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**1. Introduction**

The meeting was held at the IITA Conference Room on 13 August, 2014. It was chaired by Asamoah Larbi, Chief Scientist, Africa RISING West Africa, and IITA Country Representative. The key objectives were, to present progress report on work packages (WP) and to discuss challenges facing the implementation of activities under the work packages

Asamoah Larbi began the meeting by stating that the AR work plan for West Africa consists of 10 WP. Each WP has a leader responsible for coordination the implementation of the activities under the WP. The work packages are: WP1-Socio-economic studies on sustainable intensification in northern Ghana and southern Mali, WP2-Raising and sustaining productivity in cereal-legume cropping systems in northern Ghana, WP3-Biological control of aflatoxins in maize with Aflasafe the Ghanaian product, WP4-Integrating vegetables into cereal-legume cropping systems in northern Ghana, WP5-Improving farm and field productivity and profitability in southern Mali, WP6-Intensifying livestock and poultry production in northern Ghana and southern Mali, WP7-Raising and sustaining productivity in crop-livestock systems in northern Ghana, WP8-Land, soil and water management to intensify cereal-legume farming systems in Ghana,WP9-Managing natural resources to increase watershed productivity in southern Mali, WP10-Improving household nutrition and value addition in northern Ghana and southern Mali.

The workpackage leaders at the meeting presented progress made and future plans.

1. **Summary of discussions**
   1. **WP1- Socio-economic studies on sustainable intensification in northern Ghana**

Dr. Bekele Kotu, the team leader for this work page enumerated some of the activities that have been implemented in the previous months and those that would be done in the subsequent months. According to him, the following activities have been implemented:

* 1. Instruments have been developed for data collection.
  2. Data collection has been started.
  3. Planned to collect information on 10 area, namely
     + Quantities of inputs and outputs: grain and non-grain outputs, inputs (labor and non-labor), livestock feed
     + Prices: grain prices, wage rates, non-labor input prices, livestock prices, prices of livestock products.
  4. 144 feed chain actors (FCA) have been interviewed between November-December

For the subsequent months, he said data collection will be continued on the 10 areas, start work on adoption studies, facilitate the establishment of R4D for the other regions (Northern region and Upper East region), draw a constitution or a working document for the R4D platforms, and develop a tentative plan to conduct an adoption survey in the November/December.

**2.2 WP2- Raising and sustaining productivity in cereal-legume cropping systems in northern Ghana**

Daniel Brain Akakpo, the research associate for AR, made a power point presentation on activities carried out in the previous months. According to him, the following activities have been implemented: Maize mother trial, Cowpea mother trial, Soybean mother trial, Groundnut mother trial, Maize –sesame intercrop trial, Sesame trial on date of sowing, Cereal –legume strip cropping, Cereal – legume rotation, Pigeon pea (short and medium duration), Soil and water management trial (maize, cowpea and soybean), Hybrid maize –cowpea intercrop, Maize – cowpea live mulch trial.

He also added that all input have been distributed to 698 farmers in all AR communities as follows; Up-scaling = 200 farmers, Baby trials = 498 farmers. Both Agriculture Extension Agent and Community Facilitators have been trained on 2014 experimental protocols.

He further stated, they intend to carry out the following activities in the next coming months:

* Sowing of sesame trails,
* Weed control
* Fertilizer application
* Collect Data
* Farm visitation to farmers fields
* Spraying of insecticides

Bad weather, pest destruction, inadequate personnel, logistical challenges, non cooperating farmers and work over-load were challenges he cited.

**2.3 WP4- Integrating vegetables into cereal-legume cropping systems in northern Ghana**

This is an AVRDC-led workpackage being implemented in the northern region by Comfort Yelipoie, a research supervisor. Maize-pepper, maize-tomatoes, maize-Roselle, and maize-okra intercrops had been planted. NPK and sulphate of ammonia applied, and have also refilled stands which did not germinated.

She said data collection have begun and they intend to continue, and fertilizer be applied to some trails which have not been fertilized.

**2.4 WP6- Intensifying livestock and poultry production in northern Ghana**

Dr. Franklin Avornyo, the team leader coordinating one of the activities on livestock intensification in AR, enumerated the various activities that have been implemented so far. According to him, the following have been carried out:

* One progress report has been submitted to ILRI.
* For 2 years, nutrient flow in small ruminant is going on and that
* Feed is given to monitored household.
* Faecal matter is collected for lab analysis.
* Data is collected every fortnight.

Franklin also stated that one of the challenges confronting his work was delays associated with flow of funds.

**2.5 WP7- Raising and sustaining productivity in integrated crop-livestock systems.**

Leader of the workpackage, Asamoah said Activity 1, on integration of livestock into fallow systems has been started with raising of seedling of two shrub legumes. Activity 2 on integration of livestock into tree plantations has started with purchase of rams for the trials; and establishment of paddocks under a mango plantation in collaboration with the Ghana Airforce Base in Tamale. Activities 3, 4 and 5 have not been started due to poor rains. Activity 8 has been completed with organizing of two short-courses on ‘Integrated Crop-Livestock Production’ and ‘Experimental Design and Data Analysis Using SAS’. Focus will be on activities 1 and 2 in the coming months based on availability of rains.

**2.6 WP8-Land, soil and water management to intensify cereal-legume farming systems in Ghana**

Dr. Tim Ellis, the team leader of the IWMI component of the activities, made a PowerPoint presentation on what has been done. According to him a study on agricultural water was conducted in two communities per region. For Northern region, it was revealed that mounted ridges will be the best option, while micro dam will be best suited for Upper West and Upper East regions respectively. The study also revealed that an increase in water by 20% will resulted in 1.6 increase in yield and that shallow soil gives more runoff and less transpiration. He stated that more rains give more yield, but the yield can be different if the water is not managed well.

After his presentation, it was realised that he conducted the experiment outside the Africa RISING intervention communities. Asamoah advised him to make sure all activities that will be carried out should be in AR communities.

On Activity 8 - watershed management and water harvesting to improve the supply of water for intensive and diversified crop and livestock production – Asamoah mentioned that an MSc Student has been identified from KNUST to work on this trial as part of his Master dissertation. Trials have been established in the Northern and Upper East regions.

**2.7. WP10-Improving household nutrition and value addition in northern Ghana**

Mahama Saaka, the team leader of this work page, made a Power Point presentation on what have been done so far. The household nutrition baseline data has been re-analyzed. Two papers have been drafted. He stated that activities under this work page are being conducted in conjunction with Ghana Health Service.

1. **Summary of major outcomes**

Progressive reports on work packages 1, 2, 4, 7, 8 and 10 were presented.

In his closing remarks, Asamoah thanked participants for coming and advised the various team leaders and partners of Africa RISING project to put things in order to ensure that the aim of the project is achieved.

**Compiled by**:

Comfort Yelipoie

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|  | **Table 1. List of participants** | | |
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